/14 cont./

folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager. Their only musical instrument is the achangur, a balalaika, and even this has been borrowed (to judge from the name) from the Grusians (Grusian: chonguri). Abkhaz versification for the most part is governed by alliteration. Examples:

Varvultu --- barfuntu

Chilar marda qulardam

Arba arba sinarba

Masta mastarou

Masta stakhou

Siamul utsa

Siamul siakhou

Siandzhar utsa.

/15/

II.

Home-life of the Abkhaz -- Family -- Position of Women.

The whole domestic life of the Abkhaz is arranged so unpretentiously that all the necessary household articles, with the exception of iron things, are produced by the Abkhaz himself from materials which are at hand. The smith's trade, which requires a certain special technical knowledge, is left in the hands of special craftsmen. In every village there are two or three blacksmiths who will produce anything the Abkhaz needs from a piece of iron which he gives them. The smiths are highly regarded by the community and their craft itself has sacred significance in the eyes of the Abkhaz.

Trading is considered a shameful occupation, and the Abkhaz therefore do not engage in it, but if it were developed, the Abkhaz could sell many things at a profit. For instance, the Abkhaz women, who, by the way, are great masters of all kinds of home crafts, produce from sheep and goat skins the

/15 cont./

462 [281] [513] [912] morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In 437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter; money is not used in these cases.

433 [031] [541] The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture, cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat. A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 [556] Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle. This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it [262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave out in one place, would move to another place where grass was easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it [178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the [243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple. In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This [824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass (Agrostis vulgaris).

/18 cont./

428 (eits'bshakhu /see foreign text/). After the settlement for seniority and minority, all that is left is divided equally among the brothers; in addition, the youngest receives the father's house, yard, etc. Sisters receive less than brothers.

593 Kind and affable in public, the Abkhaz at home is rather stern, imperious, and so taciturn that it is as if he were too lazy, or at any rate not sufficiently inclined, to spare a single kind or friendly word for the members of his household. The Abkhaz woman enjoys a great deal of freedom. She is no less busy than the man; for instance, she carries the maize to the mill herself, and in some places she grinds it herself with a hand mill. In summer, she works, hoe in hand, side by side with the man in the maize-field. The wives of the members of the higher classes toil no less than their husbands, but, on the other hand, they enjoy more freedom and are held more in esteem than is the case otherwise.

562 462 [565]

562 A woman is treated with respect and esteem by young and old. Women attend community meetings, mourning rites, funeral banquets; they are present at the gatherings of the men and dance with them. There have been instances of women being the leaders of the abragi in night raids. Women perform religious rites and ceremonies. But with all this, the Abkhaz woman is expected to be innocent and modest, and to speak to older men politely and courteously.

[535] [579]

562 If her husband divorces her without sufficient reason, the Abkhaz woman has the right to appear at the village meeting and defend herself. And she skillfully uses this right: she goes to the meeting with as much determination as her husband, and defends herself with great eloquence. While the husband can divorce his wife on various grounds, she can do the same to her husband if he has done her any wrong.

586 [692]

[757 cont.]

K 233 The Kabardin still occupy themselves principally with the raising of sheep, goats, cattle, and horses, which have Arabic blood, are taller and more powerfully built than the C Abkhaz horses, and are famous for their beauty and endurance. 241 The other Cherkess have changed over more to agriculture since the end of the fighting with the Russians.

They clear the land that they wish to seed, burn off the grass in the spring, as is also done on the pastures and meadows, and then plow and harrow with the brush-harrow [Strauchegge] (see above, p. 686 [untranslated]); until recently there was no fertilization with manure. Earlier, when the land around a village was exhausted, they merely dismantled the huts and settled C in another place.

256 While the grain is ground in a water or horse mill, millet is husked by means of a pitted surface [Anke] (see above, p. 693 [untranslated]) and a wooden disk turned by hand, as is customC A ary in Finland, and ground with a hand-mill by the women.

231 Bees are often kept here, as in Abkhazia.

The beehives resemble those commonly used by us; they are cut out of linden bark or plaited out of willow twigs and smeared with clay and cow manure. As protection from the rain, a thick straw plaiting is laid on top. [758] Swarms that have flown out are caught with a bark cover fastened on a stick. In July and August, the hives are placed in the forests of the foothills, otherwise near the villages.

A C 462 The women have the same tasks as among the mountain peoples; among the Abkhaz, however, the men help in A C [281] the fields, fruit orchards, vineyards, and at other tasks. Among other things, the women also produce morocco leather (tsuš), A E [412] [493] from which belts, shoes, bedding, etc. are made. Besides vessels and utensils, the men carve beautiful spoons out of wood and horn, build wagons (ǯkū) with two disk-wheels that are hewn out of a single piece of wood and the axle turns with them (cf. Fig. 416 [in untranslated portion]). They used to produce their own A C [389] gunpowder, leeching the saltpeter (gin-khuš = powder-salt) for it from sheep manure. [Fig. 450 appears here.]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

[796] sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaǩwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little [243] wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers [469] with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible [188] herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; [263] *dsdsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

[512] Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ǩwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the [340] house, *dishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), [359] on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àämen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: [539] *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nàkhak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number [106] seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head [80] of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[243] [1] *Alaǩwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] ǩwa is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian [193] *gort* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon [82] and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An*, *Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are [191] included in both pleiades.